

To: Dexter City Council Members

From: Michael Grissom

Date: April 7, 2019

I am writing you reference the ongoing discussions of a new fire station in the City of Dexter. I have been a Dexter Area Fire Department (DAFD) firefighter for almost 24 years. Some of that time was as a paid-on-call firefighter when I lived in the City of Dexter and now as a full-time firefighter and resident of Dexter Township.

The DAFD is in need of a new facility. There have been talks of a new fire station for more than twenty years. The station has not been properly maintained in that time. The reason given was that it was a waste of money because there were discussions about building a new fire station.

When the current station was built, one of the trucks that was used was a 1947 Dodge that the association still owns (about the size of a F350). It was easy to walk around that size of truck to reload hose on the truck, with guys loading hose on the truck next to them and store other needed equipment in the building. At that time, the Fire Department only responded to fires. The Fire Department no longer just responds to fires, we respond to much more. All you need to do is look at how big the trucks are. The trucks need to be so large to carry all the equipment that is needed now.

There is not enough space to load hose after calls or maintain trucks. Firefighters are forced to drag clean dry hose through the same small space where dirty hose was just washed in order to reload it onto the trucks. We also have to clean, fill and reassemble the air packs in that same small, dirty work area, which may lead to contaminated breathing equipment. The electrical system is maxed out. There is an inadequate ability to fill or top off water tanks in the trucks. The air lines from the air compressor leak a lot and the compressor is undersized to fill the tires on the large trucks.

The meeting room is too small for trainings, and does not meet ADA. The second floor does not have adequate air exchange, heat or AC. There is only one bathroom / shower. There is insufficient storage for medical equipment, office files or turnout gear. There is inadequate office work space, kitchen and living spaces. There is no reception area: anyone that walks in the building can go anywhere they want, look at, take or damage anything whether we are there or not.

In order to build a new station at 8140 Main Street, staff and equipment as well as communications technology will need to be relocated to an adequate facility for at least a year-and-a-half while the current station is rebuilt. This will be a large and unnecessary expense. Moving personnel and trucks to Dexter Twp. and Webster Twp. will cause longer response times to the City. Creating a temporary facility that meets the needs of the department will be a waste of money. Instead, use that money to build the proper and permanent fire station that meets the needs of the Fire Department today and for the next 20 years.

The site at Copeland is too costly to purchase, renovate and build. The site at Dexter Ann Arbor and Meadow View is the only available space left that is large enough to build a new fire station. As a Dexter Township resident, the response from Meadow View to my house will increase slightly, but a new fire station can create efficiencies that could reduce the time it takes to get out the door, such as quicker access from the office and living quarters to the bay without steep stairs to negotiate and all equipment on the same level in the building.

Also, it will be healthier for the firefighters to have a decontamination area to clean the carcinogens off equipment and put it back together in a separate, clean environment.

Dexter chose a long time ago that they wanted the main fire station to be in the City. While this decision costs the City more money to have a larger fire station to house necessary trucks and equipment as well as full-time staff, the City has benefitted and will continue to benefit from this resource and shorter response times if it is built adequately to meet the needs of the Fire Department.

As you consider the options of where and how to build, please take adequate time to discuss with the Fire Chief and your consultant the needs of the fire department so money is not wasted on things that are assumed to be needed, but instead is spent on the facilities and equipment that will improve safety, functionality and response times.



Michael Grissom,

Concerned DAFD resident and employee

cc.

Harley Rider, DAFD Board Chair

Robert Smith, DAFD Fire Chief